

# Incidence of Drug Abuse -Crystal Methamphetamine among Secondary School Students in Awka Educational Zone, Anambra State

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## ABSTRACT

The study determines the incidence of drug abuse (crystal methamphetamine) among secondary school students in Awka Educational Zone in Anambra State. Three research questions and one null hypothesis guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. A sample of 660 out of 1,984 Senior Secondary School (SSS II) students in the 18 public secondary schools in Awka Educational Zone in Anambra State was used for the study using purposively sampling technique. An adapted instrument with reliability co-efficient of 0.78 was used for data collection. Frequency count and simple percentages were used to answer the research questions while chi-square was used for testing the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between category of school type and incidence of crystal methamphetamine use among students in Awka Educational Zone in Anambra State. The study concluded that there is a significant relationship between the incidence of crystal methamphetamine use and category of schools as students in mixed schools had more cases of crystal methamphetamine use than boys or girls' schools. Among others, it was recommended that secondary schools should set up functional drug addiction counseling programmes under the authority of trained school guidance and counselors to ensure that students who are using crystal methamphetamine to access specialised interventions to discourage students from engaging in drug abuse.

**Keywords:** Drug abuse, crystal methamphetamine, substance, adolescents

## INTRODUCTION

Drug abuse is the habitual use of drugs or illicit substances to alter one's mood, emotion or state of consciousness for a moment. Drug use is described as the utilization of psycho-active substance (Ayenew, Kabeta & Woldemichael, 2020) to induce intoxication. Drug or substance abuse has become one of the growing major public health that has cut across the nooks and crooks of Nigeria. Globally, the population that is prone to drug abuse is largely adolescents and secondary school students for reasons based on self-centred emotions, uncontrollable sense of independence and peer pressure (World Health Organization, 2014). The fact that majority of secondary school students are at the age of adolescence, which is a period of experimentation (Niall, 2015) could be attributed to their propensity to participate in drug abuse. Oppong, Meyer-Weitz and Petersen (2014) posited that at the age of adolescence, students are curious to find out the effectiveness of a particular drug just to feel good and feel grown up among their peers.

Currently, drug abuse has become a growing problem in the Nigerian education system, especially due to its negative effects on academic performance, health and well-being of students. An analysis of drug abuse in the Nigerian education system showed that marijuana, tramadol, alcohol, shisha, tobacco, codeine and cigarette are frequently abused by students (Adekeye, Adeusi, Chenube, Ahmadu & Sholarin, 2015). Based on multiple recent media reports gathered by (Mefoh, Ugwu & Eze, 2018) many young persons in South East, Nigeria have added crystal methamphetamine to the list of drugs abuse. Crystal methamphetamine is a highly addictive synthetic psycho-stimulant that increases energy and feelings of euphoria, among other physiological effects (Hobkirk, Watt, Myers, Skinner & Meade, 2016). Crystal methamphetamine is

perceived as the fastest growing addictive substance ever introduced into the market, and at some point, has even exceeded commonly used drugs such marijuana and ecstasy (Ponicki, Waller & Remer, 2013)

According to the Noroozi, Malekinejad and Rahimi-Movaghar (2018), the abuse of crystal methamphetamine is increasing with more than 35 million people consuming the drug per day, while the number of users of cocaine and heroin is estimated to be 15 and 10 million respectively. The geometric patronage of crystal methamphetamine is anchored on the fact that it is a synthetic drug that can be produced in small and unsafe local laboratories in any country (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2016) making it the third most commonly reported primary illicit substance of abuse after marijuana. Crystal methamphetamine is a synthetic (man-made) chemical, unlike cocaine, which comes from a plant (Sumbal, 2020). Crystal methamphetamine has the same level of addiction like cocaine, but what is more fascinating about crystal methamphetamine is that it is cheap and easily accessible in the streets of Anambra State and Nigeria at large.

In South Africa, crystal methamphetamine is locally referred to as tik due to the ticking sound produced when smoked (Baselt, 2020). It is popularly known as crystal meth or glass in Nigeria at large but youths in Anambra State calls it ice or *mkpuru-mmiri*. It is called *mkpuru-mmiri* because the substance comes in clear crystal chunks or shiny bluish-white rocks. Crystal methamphetamine is popular in Nigeria. The United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (2016) estimated a 32 percent increase in methamphetamine use and 55 percent increase in people having methamphetamine use disorder in Nigeria. The abuse of crystal methamphetamine in Anambra State is now a socio-economic problem with local communities rising against its consumers. Most communities in Anambra State have adopted a special sanction for abusers of the drug which involved tying them to pillars at community halls or trees in village squares, and flog them mercilessly to discourage them from consuming the drug.

Crystal methamphetamine can be taken by smoking, swallowing, snorting, or by injection. Depending on how the drug is used, the effect can last for 6 to 12 hours (Okafor, 2020). Oral ingestion can produce pleasurable effects within 20 minutes while smoking or injecting the drug causes an immediate and intense bliss (Loftis & Janowsky, 2014). The preferred intake procedure for most adolescent's friendship cliques in southeastern Nigeria is by snorting the substance (Dumbili & Ebuenyi, 2022). A clique member first wraps the substance inside a foil; then, uses a lighter to melt it. The individual then makes a small hole on the foil and inserts a straw into the hole, through which the individual sniffs the drug. Sniffing (or snorting) does not produce immediate pleasurable effect; however, a euphoric high is energized within 3 to 5 minutes of use (Oppong, 2016).

People who use crystal methamphetamine are prone to violent and neglectful behaviours and they might often inflict physical and psychological harm to themselves, their families and/or other members of the community (Eluke & Mbazie, 2022). Chukwuleta (2021) narrated how a secondary school student, aged fifteen years, murdered his father simply because the man refused to give him the money he asked for. There was another report of a school boy who attacked his mother with a machete and chased her away from her home (Dumbili, 2020). All these behaviours were traced to the use of *mkpuru-mmiri*. The fact that even secondary school students can easily access crystal methamphetamine like it is vitamin C makes it more worrisome.

## Statement of Problem

In recent times in Anambra State, particularly in the city of Awka, there is a sharp increase in the use of drug abuse (crystal methamphetamine) among young people. The increasing addiction to hard drugs, especially crystal methamphetamine has reached a worrisome level as some communities and its youth leaders have attributed the drug to be the oxygen that drives most crimes and bad behaviours exhibited by individuals in the town. The fact that, drug abuse is openly promoted during important cultural and

ceremonial occasions such as marriage, burial and birthday ceremonies provides opportunity for secondary school students to have a taste of the crystal methamphetamine and with more frequent intake of the drug, they become addicts. The rapid and extensive spread of crystal methamphetamine remains a problem in Anambra State. In addition, empirical research works on the incidence of crystal methamphetamine among students in secondary schools in relation to their different gender and school types are not yet known. Therefore, there is need to contribute to this knowledge, by establishing the actual situation consumption of crystal methamphetamine among secondary school students from Awka zone in Anambra State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to determine incidence of drug abuse (crystal methamphetamine) among secondary school students in Awka educational zone of Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to examine the incidence of:

1. Drug abuse (crystal methamphetamine) among students in boy's secondary schools in Awka Educational Zone of Anambra State?
2. Drug abuse (crystal methamphetamine) among students in in girl's secondary schools in Awka Educational Zone of Anambra State
3. Drug abuse (crystal methamphetamine) among students in co-educational secondary schools in Awka Educational Zone of Anambra State

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the rate of incidence of drug abuse (crystal methamphetamine) among students in boy's secondary schools in Awka Educational Zone of Anambra State?
2. What is the rate of incidence of drug abuse (crystal methamphetamine) among students in girl's secondary schools in Awka Educational Zone of Anambra State?
3. What is the rate of incidence of drug abuse (crystal methamphetamine) among students in co-educational secondary schools in Awka Educational Zone of Anambra State?

### **Research Hypothesis**

The following null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the incidence of drug abuse (crystal methamphetamine) use and the category of schools.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. Descriptive survey research design involves a collection of sample opinions, attitudes, or feelings in order to estimate the total overall survey. Descriptive survey research design is considered appropriate for the study because a questionnaire will be used to elicit responses the information that this study sought to establish through its research questions.

### **Population**

The population for the study comprised all the 1,984 Senior Secondary School (SSS II) students in the 18 public secondary schools in Awka Educational Zone in Anambra State. The population is made up of 86

students in the two girl’s secondary schools, 34 students in one boy’s secondary school and 1864 students in the 15 co-educational secondary schools (Statistics Unit, Post-Primary School Management Board, PPSMB, Awka Zone, 2021).

### Sample and Sampling Technique

The 86 students in two girl’s secondary schools and 34 students in one boy’s secondary school were studied without sampling. Secondly, out of the 15 public co-educational secondary schools in Awka Educational Zone in Anambra State, nine schools were selected using simple random sampling by balloting. From each of the nine co-educational secondary schools, purposive sampling technique was used in selecting 30 secondary school II students of both sexes which result to 540 students. This brought the total sample size to 660 secondary school II students.

### Method of Data Collection

Copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents by the researcher with the help of five research assistants. The research assistants were briefed by the researcher on the purpose of the study and how to administer the questionnaire to the respondents and collect the copies immediately on completion. The use of research assistants was to facilitate quick distribution and retrieval of the questionnaire copies from the respondents in the area of study. This exercise lasted for one week due to the fact that the researcher and his assistants travelled across the study area to reach the respondents.

### Method of Data Analysis

Frequency count and simple percentages were used to answer the research questions to determine whether secondary school II students in Awka Educational Zone of Anambra State take crystal methamphetamine or not. Any item that scored up to 50 percent was considered high incidence use of crystal methamphetamine while below 50 percent was low incidence use of crystal methamphetamine. Chi-square was used to test null hypothesis on the incidence of crystal methamphetamine use and category of schools at 0.05 level of significance. A hypothesis was rejected where the p- value is less than the significant value. Otherwise, the null hypothesis was accepted. The data analysis was carried out using statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.

### Research Question 1

What is the rate of incidence of drug abuse (crystal methamphetamine) among students in boy’s secondary schools in Awka Educational Zone of Anambra State?

**Table 1: Rate of incidence of crystal methamphetamine in male secondary school**

Variable	Frequency		Percentage (%)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Boy’s School	16	18	47.1	52.9

Data in Table 1 shows 16 (47.1%) of male students had use crystal methamphetamine while 18(52.9%) has not taken crystal methamphetamine. From the table above, there is a low incidence of crystal methamphetamine use among students in boy’s secondary school in Awka Educational Zone of Anambra State.

### Research Question 2

What is the rate of incidence of drug abuse (crystal methamphetamine) among students in girl’s secondary

schools in Awka Educational Zone of Anambra State?

**Table 2: Rate of incidence of crystal methamphetamine in female secondary schools**

Variable	Frequency		Percentage (%)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Girl's Schools	7	79	8.1	91.9

Data in Table 2 shows 7(8.1%) of students in girl's secondary schools has taken crystal methamphetamine while 79(91.9%) has not taken crystal methamphetamine. From the table above, there is a low incidence of crystal methamphetamine use among students in girl's secondary schools in Awka Educational Zone of Anambra State.

### Research Question 3

What is the rate of incidence of drug abuse (crystal methamphetamine) among students in co-educational secondary schools in Awka Educational Zone of Anambra State?

**Table 3: Rate of incidence of crystal methamphetamine in co-educational secondary schools**

Variable	Frequency		Percentage (%)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Mixed Schools	311	229	57.6	42.4

Data in Table 3 shows 311(57.6%) of students in co-educational secondary schools had use crystal methamphetamine while 229(42.4%) has not taken crystal methamphetamine. From the table above, there is a high incidence of crystal methamphetamine use among students in co-educational secondary schools in Awka Educational Zone of Anambra State.

### Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the incidence of drug abuse (crystal methamphetamine) use and the type of the schools.

Category of secondary schools	Yes	No	Df	$\chi^2$	Sig.
Girl's schools	7	79			
Boy's school	26	8			
Co-educational schools	311	229	2	9.102	0.01

Data in Table 4 shows that there is a significant relationship between category of school type and incidence of crystal methamphetamine use among students in Awka Educational Zone of Anambra State. This is shown by the p-value of 0.01, which is less than the significance level of 0.05. The null hypothesis of no significant difference is therefore rejected.

## RESULTS

Finding of the study showed that students in boy's secondary school and girl's secondary schools have low incidence of crystal methamphetamine but students in boy's secondary schools use crystal methamphetamine more in Awka Educational Zone of Anambra State. The researcher attributed this finding on the basis that male students are more likely to be adventurous than their female counterparts and they are

more likely to be experimenting in taking crystal methamphetamine during their adolescent years. The outcome of the study is in agreement with Adegboro (2014) who reported that the rate of drug abuse was more prevalent among boys than girls in educational institutions. In parallel with the study results, Idowu, Aremu, Olumide and Ogunlaja (2018) discovered that the ratio of drug abuse among male students was higher than female students. The finding that male secondary school students are more likely to use crystal methamphetamine than female secondary school students can be attributed to the fact that boys are more prone to engage in high-risk behaviour such as consuming different types of illicit drugs at early age than girls.

Also, findings of the study revealed that there is a high incidence of crystal methamphetamine use among students in co-educational secondary schools in Awka Educational Zone of Anambra State. The finding of this study is in agreement with Chukwuleta (2021) which reported that drug abuse is among students in mixed schools because students tend to learn smoking and digesting illicit substance from their peers when they are together. The study further indicates that there is a significant relationship between category of school type and incidence of crystal methamphetamine use among students in Awka Educational Zone of Anambra State. The finding indicated that of crystal methamphetamine use was highest in co-educational schools, followed closely by boys' school and the lowest rate being girls' schools. Therefore, it shows that the category of schools did have influence on the incidence of crystal methamphetamine use among students in secondary schools. This is supported by Paniel-Egwakhe, Atulomah and Agbede (2022) which reported that mixing girls and boys in the same school increased the chances of drug abuse. The information shows that most probably teachers were finding it difficult to instill discipline in mixed schools, as drug abuse and addiction was a common behaviour, leading to indiscipline among students.

## CONCLUSION

The adolescent period of secondary school students is a time of vulnerability during which internal conflict caused by hormonal changes, the influence of peer group, and the attitude and practices of significant adults in their lives such as teachers and parents, societal pressure, norms and values and economic situations all contribute to mold the character and behavioural patterns that are carried onto adulthood. Secondary school students are high-risk group, more likely to be engaged in risky sexual and illicit drug activities. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that there is a significant relationship between the incidence of crystal methamphetamine use and category of schools as students in mixed schools had more cases of crystal methamphetamine use than boys or girls' schools.

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